CCME

Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment

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CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

A COMPENDIUM OF CANADIAN EXPERIENCES

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Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment

FOREWORD

This report has been prepared to fulfill Recommendation 4.2 of the *Report of the National Task Force on Environment and Economy*. That recommendation reads as follows:

"4.2 CCREM, in consultation with industry and non-government organizations, should prepare a compendium of Canadian experiences in developing conservation strategies by September 1988. The compendium will aid jurisdictions in working out procedures and protocols for the development and integration of conservation strategies."

Conservation Strategies were seen by the National Task Force on Environment and Economy as "blueprints for sustainable development." As such, their preparation in every province and territory was one of the most important recommendations of the task force. Coordination of effective conservation strategies across Canada requires clear communication among the provincial and territorial governments which are to assume responsibility for the coordination and development of conservation strategies in their jurisdictions. This report is a small step toward the goal of better coordination of the many conservation strategies underway in Canada.

In 1987, the Canadian Society of Environmental Biologists (CSEB) published a report titled *Conservation Strategies in Canada*. The report described conservation strategy activity in each province and territory, as well as work at the federal level and work done by non-government organizations. To some extent, the CSEB report anticipated the need for a compendium of Canadian experiences.

Building on the CSEB document's valuable contribution to conservation strategies in Canada, the purpose of this report is to further document the progress, as ascertained by a questionnaire, of strategy development across the country. But a more important purpose is to encourage communication among the jurisdictions, regions, groups, and individuals preparing conservation strategies throughout Canada.

One of the fundamental tenets of environmentally-sound and economically-sustainable development is that action must be coordinated. Coordinated action, in turn, depends on shared goals, common principles and conservation strategy processes. This report offers a definition, six objectives (goals), and several principles that were generally agreed upon by questionnaire respondents from every province and territory and from several non-government groups (see Appendix B). In addition, a series of steps are outlined that can be followed to develop a conservation strategy.

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PART 1

WHY DO WE NEED CONSERVATION STRATEGIES?

Preparing conservation strategies in each province and territory, and federally, is fundamental to achieving sustainable development in Canada. The National Task Force on Environment and Economy recognized this fact. The task force concluded that conservation strategies are a "vital part of the integration of the environment and the economy in policy and decision making and urged commitment from all Canadian governments to arrive at conservation strategies."

The task force pointed to one of the central problems of our time when it stated in the *Report of the National Task Force on Environment and Economy*:
The greatest weakness with these efforts [to achieve sustainable development] has been the sectoral approach to planning and development.

Unless there is agreement on an overall strategy for reaching sustainable development in each region and in Canada as a nation, our efforts will continue to be fragmented among government agencies and economic sectors. Persisting with a narrow, sectoral focus will not cure our present circumstances. Without this overall guiding framework, measurement of progress toward agreed-upon goals across many economic sectors will be difficult.

Many interests legitimately compete for resources and each of these interests has to play a role in preparing a strategy if it is to work. Many Canadians already work in a strategic framework. A corporate or departmental strategy usually progresses from:

- a mission statement (an encompassing statement of purpose),
- to a series of objectives (broad goals pursuant to the mission statement),
- to multiple goals (intended to guide more specific action directed to achieving each of the objectives),
- leading finally to specific and measurable actions to attain each goal.

The entire strategic plan is often conditioned by a corporate culture intended to provide broad moral or value standards that are used as criteria for assessing the actions taken. Responsibilities and resources are then allocated to achieve the goals in order of priority and careful records of cost and achievement are kept. The effectiveness of the actions taken to achieve the goals is assessed regularly and modifications are made accordingly. This is very similar to the course recommended to develop and implement a conservation strategy.

Conservation strategies differ in structure and in recommendations for action, depending on their setting. The World Conservation Strategy is a valuable guide: it provides an outline for developing national, regional, or local strategies. In fact, the original World Conservation Strategy document could have been called "Sustainable Development: A Framework for the Conservation Development of the Biosphere."

The World Conservation Strategy itself cannot simply be adopted in various locales. It must be adapted to conditions in each place. Strategies being developed

around the globe and in Canada vary according to the location (climate, quantity and quality of land, air, water), political system, economy, culture and ecosystem. Adapting the basic principles to a specific locale requires effort, a great deal of effort. It is meaningless, however, to simply endorse the principles of the World Conservation Strategy without accounting for the unique circumstances of each locale.

Developing an integrated plan of action for achieving sustainable development will be challenging and difficult. Preparing and implementing a meaningful strategy involves perseverance and attention to detail that is required for accomplishment in the physical world. Armed with a well-considered and widely-supported plan of attack, Canada can direct valuable time, money and effort toward achieving a sustainable future.

The next two sections of this report (Part 2 and Part 3) discuss the results of a questionnaire sent to organizations known to be involved in the preparation or support of conservation strategies in Canada. Part 2 provides a definition of conservation strategies with which many of the people most directly involved in strategy development in Canada have agreed. The definition, objectives, principles, and process presented in Part 2 should help to form the basis for continued conservation strategy development in Canada. Part 3 examines some of the other results of the questionnaire. The final section provides some conclusions about promoting strategy development across the country.

There are three appendices to the report. Appendix A includes the table of contents from the Prince Edward Island conservation strategy document. Appendix B provides a list of conservation strategy contacts in each province and territory, and Appendix C is the questionnaire on which the report is based.

PART 2

THE WHAT, WHO, AND HOW OF CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

INTRODUCTION

This section covers Part II of the questionnaire (see Appendix C). Part II provided a basic definition, broad objectives, several guiding principles, and some process-oriented steps in developing conservation strategies. All were based on the World Conservation Strategy, with modifications and extensions to suit the Canadian situation. There was general agreement with the proposed material, but many suggestions were made to improve the phrasing and clarify the intent.

The following definition, objectives, and guidelines incorporate as many of the suggested changes as possible. It seems clear that there is broad consensus on the purposes and direction of conservation strategies among those involved in their preparation.

DEFINITION

A conservation strategy is a guide for the sustainable use of our resources and the environment. It contains objectives, principles, and actions designed to ensure that the use and management of resources today will allow ourselves and future generations to maintain or improve the quality and standard of living, and allow those less fortunate today an opportunity to improve their lot. Sustainability requires that resource use be environmentally, economically and socially sound. Preservation of certain resources or representative areas is an integral part of sustaining some ecosystems.

A conservation strategy is designed to establish objectives and to provide points of reference and standards of evaluation in achieving those objectives. It is not intended as a set of immutable rules for behaviour. A strategy points the way and presents criteria by which to evaluate decisions and progress rather than specifying rigid plans for the future.

OBJECTIVES

The following objectives are based on conservation strategies within Canada and have been refined according to the comments received through the questionnaire.

1. Maintain ecological processes and life-support systems on which human survival and development depend, for example, ecological succession, soil regeneration and protection, recycling of nutrients and the cleansing of waters.

2. Preserve biological diversity, the basis for many of the above processes and life-support systems. The diversity of living resources provides the foundation for the protection and improvement of cultivated plants and domesticated animals, the adaptability of microorganisms vital to survival and the security of many of our

industries. The intrinsic value of life and the aesthetic value of species are important components of human vitality.

3. Promote and encourage sustainable use of ecosystems and species. Fish and wildlife, forests, agricultural soils, and grazing lands support some of our most important industries, such as tourism, forestry, fishing and farming. Harvests should not exceed rates of regeneration required to meet future needs.

4. Use and manage non-renewable resources in the interests of developing a long-term environmentally sound and sustainable economy. This may mean using a nonrenewable resource at a rate that allows the development of substitutes, or using non-renewable resources that extends their life cycle as long as possible.

5. Encourage recycling of waste products and the development of new products from waste, and adopt more energy efficient processes. Take environment into account from extraction to disposal.

6. Maintain and develop diverse opportunities for the use and appreciation of natural resources to provide for recreational, spiritual, aesthetic, and other non-material needs of Canadians.

7. Maintain and improve the quality of life in the urban environment.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Conservation strategies rely on important principles to provide guidelines for resource use. These principles are used as criteria for evaluating the extent to which proposed or present activities are in keeping with the overall goal of sustainable development.

1. **Resources are managed for sustainable use**. Using resources in a sustainable manner is akin to spending the interest while keeping the capital. Anticipate the limits of the resource base.

2. **Where possible, encourage environmentally-sound renewable resource development over non-renewable development**. Realistically, a resource is renewable only if it is capable of regeneration without excessive human help (to the point of being uneconomic). Some resources are theoretically renewable, but for practical human purposes, once used, they are forever gone. It may be reasonable to exploit a non-renewable resource when renewable resources are scarce or costly to use. The wealth created by such exploitation may itself contribute to sustainable development by relieving poverty, building human skills and expertise, or providing the capital for environmentally-sound renewable resource development.

3. **Keep your options open**. In the management of resources, prevent the loss of options by minimizing the impact of each resource user on the potential alternative users.The ultimate closure of options is species extinction.

4. **Integrate as much information as possible in planning and managing resources**. As described in the *Report of the National Task Force on Environment and Economy*, the greatest weakness in Canadian efforts to achieve sustainable development has been the sectoral approach to planning and development. A multisectoral approach to planning and policy formulation minimizes the recurring and wasteful problem of unanticipated consequences.

5. **Focus on causes as well as symptoms and mix cure with prevention**. It is often easier to identify and treat the symptoms of ecological problems than to dig deeper and find the cause. However, dealing only with the symptoms is ineffective in the long term. When causes are left untreated, the symptoms may gradually erode our ability to deal with either. A successful strategy should be a careful

combination of curing current problems and equipping people and institutions with the knowledge needed to anticipate and avoid future problems.

6. **Find common ground**. Know the extent of your agreement before you begin disagreeing. Conflict and its resolution in the open forum of reasoned debate help achieve the balance and wisdom necessary to meet the various needs of our pluralistic society. It is pointless and wasteful of time and money to perpetuate a conflict arising from mutual misunderstanding or ideological prejudgment.

7. **Base improvements to our resource management systems on present institutions and processes**. Each conservation strategy has to address existing policies, programs, institutional arrangements and structures before innovative suggestions for improvements can be made. To improve a system, those most affected – the public, industry, and government at all levels – must be involved in the process to reach the consensus necessary for agreement on goals, principles, and standards.

8. **Recognize that fairness and equity are essential to lasting change**. Economically-sustainable and environmentally-sound development will not occur without a common sense of justice being served. The commitment and sense of personal and shared responsibility necessary to progress will not emerge without social and economic opportunity for all. Development is not sustainable if a significant portion of the population is left behind. Teamwork depends on providing opportunity for the entire team to win.

PROCESSES FOR DEVELOPING CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

Conservation strategy development generally has entailed eight steps which culminate in a document that provides direction for the sustainable use and management of resources. These steps are:

1. establish goals for sustainable development in accordance with the objectives and principles (see preceding sections);

2. determine what is required to achieve these goals while accommodating both conservation and development objectives;

3. establish priorities for the goals using the criteria of significance, urgency, irreversibility, cost and probability of success;

4. identify the changes required to meet the goals;

5. analyze present and planned mechanisms for dealing with the prescribed changes;

6. propose the most cost-effective, least disruptive and most integrated methods for facilitating change;

7. derive a plan of action for implementing the agreed-upon methods;

8. provide a means for a continuing evaluation: of the goals, of progress toward achieving them, and of the cost-effectiveness of the solutions.

The name "Conservation Strategy" was retained in the Task Force's recommendations for several reasons. First, the World Conservation Strategy remains the most comprehensive and specific plan for achieving sustainable and environmentally sound development. Second, redefinition of conservation and development is fundamental to attaining sustainable development in Canada and the World Conservation Strategy begins with this redefinition. Third, the phrase "Conservation Strategy" has meaning for many people, in many parts of the world and across Canada. Continuity and common goals and principles are maintained by the use of the phrase in Canada. Fourth, the World Conservation Strategy ignores ideology

and focuses on practical steps. This allows different cultures to adapt the steps to their requirements, while retaining the essential practicality of the outcome. Following this lead may enhance Canada's image as being relatively free of ideological dogma.

PART 3

CANADIAN EXPERIENCE IN THE PREPARATION OF CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

This section deals with responses to Part I of the questionnaire. The responses to the questions in Part I varied much more than those concerning the purpose and intent of the strategies. The following is a summary of some of the significant findings of the survey.

The questionnaire requested information about the preparation of conservation strategies in Canada and solicited advice on their preparation.

Questions were included regarding:

- cross-country progress in the preparation of conservation strategies;
- scope of the conservation strategy;
- steps followed in the preparation of a conservation strategy, including the organizations involved;
- additional comments on key requirements.

STATUS OF CONSERVATION STRATEGIES IN CANADA

Provinces, Territories, and the Federal Government

Price Edward Island was the only province to have completed a conservation strategy at the time of survey. The government approved the strategy in 1987. Other conservation strategies are underway in Alberta, the Yukon, the Northwest Territories, Quebec, and Nova Scotia. With the exception of Alberta, these strategies are expected to be completed in the period 1989 to 1991.

Nearly all other provinces indicated that conservation strategies would be underway by the end of 1989. Estimated completion dates of these strategies range from 1990 to 1992.

Non-government organizations began the process in four provinces; provincial governments were the initiators in others. Several provinces intend to place overall responsibility for their conservation strategy with their Round Table on environment and economy.

The federal government is committed to preparing a federal conservation strategy, and to providing whatever assistance to other jurisdictions is deemed agreeable and appropriate.

Other strategies with conservation/environmental objectives are described below.

Northern Strategies

The northern strategies are coordinated through the Working Group on Northern Conservation. This group consists of non-government and government representatives from each of the northern strategy groups and two departments of the federal government: Fisheries and Oceans, and Indian and Northern Affairs.

- Yukon Territorial Conservation Strategy
- Northwest Territories Conservation Strategy
- Arctic Marine Conservation Strategy (Department of Fisheries and Oceans)
- Inuit Regional Conservation Strategy
- Northern Community-based Strategies
- Makivik Regional Conservation Strategy (Quebec)
- Vuntat Gwichin Conservation Strategy (Old Crow local strategy)
- Inuit Circumpolar Conference

Other Strategies

Several other strategies were specifically listed by respondents to the questionnaire.

- North American Waterfowl Management Plan
- Sectoral Conservation Strategies for Forestry and Wildlife, Nova Scotia
- A Strategy for Soil and Water Conservation in Canada, Agricultural Institute of Canada, 1985
- Towards a Conservation Strategy for Ontario, Conservation Council of Ontario, 1986
- Prairie Conservation Action Plan, Wild West Program, World Wildlife Fund
- Carolinian Canada Strategy, World Wildlife Fund
- National Forest Sector Strategy for Canada
- A Strategy for Soil Conservation and Land Use for the Prairie Parkland Region, Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration

SCOPE OF CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

This part of the questionnaire assessed what should be included in a conservation strategy. In the responses, the following sectors were emphasized.

- Agriculture
- Biological/Genetic Diversity
- Fish and Wildlife
- Forestry
- Heritage Resources (Cultural and Natural Heritage)
- Land Use
- Mineral Development
- Parks and Outdoor Recreation
- Tourism
- Water Resources
- Wetlands

Strong emphasis was also given to cross-sectoral topics such as environmental education, legislation, policies, transboundary effects, and the resolution of water and land use conflicts.

Low priority appears to have been given to the urban environment and energy-related factors such as renewable and non-renewable resources and energy conservation. However, most conservation strategies in Canada are in an early stage of

development. As more interests are involved in the preparation of a strategy, sectors such as energy and the urban environment may emerge as important topics in more jurisdictions.

STEPS FOLLOWED IN PREPARING CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

The questionnaire asked respondents to list the steps used or steps they intend to use in the preparation of conservation strategies. The following is a generic list of recommended steps based on the responses received.

1. **Be prepared to make the decision to proceed.**

   Ensure government commitment (that is, acceptance of the need for a more focused approach to managing resources through a conservation strategy).

   Commitment of ministries most likely to be involved is important.

   It is important to ensure that resources are set aside for the first year of operation. Resources also include staff time in government departments.

2. **Establish an action committee or steering committee and appoint a project coordinator.**

   The committee should include representatives from government, non-government organizations, industry, academia, and other affected parties. Some jurisdictions have indicated that their Round Table, or a subcommittee of the Round Table, will assume this role when it is established.

3. **Prepare a prospectus for the conservation strategy.**

   The first task of the Action Committee is to prepare a prospectus for distribution to the public for comment.

   The prospectus should describe the purpose of the conservation strategy, the problems or issues of concern, probable areas of investigation, public involvement, and the overall process for the preparation of the conservation strategy.

   The prospectus could be prepared either by the coordinator and staff assigned to the project or by a consultant.

4. **Analyze problems and divide into sectors.**

   Prepare background or discussion papers on problem areas. Establish working groups or sub-groups of the Action Committee to assemble background information.

   Involvement of the key actors is important at this stage.

5. **Obtain public input.**

   The Action Committee solicits the views of the interested groups and the public at large on various sectors. Several respondents mentioned the value of workshops at this stage, and the need to identify tangible actions.

6. Prepare draft strategy.

Summarize results of sectoral meetings and public involvement and combine with other commissioned work to form the basis of a draft conservation strategy.

7. Consult with the public.

Distribute the draft strategy to public and affected groups for comment.

Hold public hearings or other broad-based public participation programs.

8. Conduct final review and submit strategy to government.

The Action Committee completes the conservation strategy and presents it, with recommendations for immediate action, to government for approval.

A communications strategy for the announcement of the conservation strategy is also recommended.

9. Government approval and review.

Review, revision, and approval by government, implementation of action items and incorporation of strategic objectives in the planning and development process.

10. Establish follow-up and monitoring process for future evaluation.

The conservation strategy should be evaluated three to five years after the date of approval, although individual programs may be evaluated much earlier.

ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

A generally accepted principle is that as many affected parties as possible should be involved. The following lists were gleaned from the questionnaires and are not intended to be comprehensive.

Governments

Provincial, federal, policy committees, resource management and economic development ministries or departments, government commissions

Industry

Sector associations and individual companies from the non-renewable resource and renewable resources sectors

Manufacturing, service, tourism and other industries

Chambers of Commerce

Federation of Labour

Non-government Organizations

Native organizations, conservation organizations, hunter/trapper/fish/game/outfitter associations, wildlife federations

Educational Institutions

Universities, community colleges, and boards of education

Municipal

Communities and public utility organizations, health care organizations

Other

Science and museum organizations, United Nations Environment Program, International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, professional associations

Public At Large

Interested individuals or groups, professional associations, community service groups

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

The following comments were provided by the respondents to indicate some of the areas of special importance to their conservation strategy project. Their intention was to raise these points for others to note.

Key Requirements

- Selection of consultants/facilitator/coordinator/agency
- Appropriate funding commitments, sources, alternatives
- Establishment of mechanism for consultation between government and other sectors
- Clear definition, early in the process, of what has to be done
- Establishment of working group including members of the public
- Regular briefings to cabinet or cabinet committee
- Setting a mission statement and identifying the process clearly (done through a prospectus)
- Full commitment from government agencies

Most Successful Techniques

- Small group workshops
- Widespread distribution of key documents
- Public involvement program
- Being opportunistic about implementing sections of the strategy

Suggested Improvements to the Process

- Improved budget and staffing
- Strong government lead to bring other groups on board
- Workshops
- Education and public awareness

Communications

Many respondents stressed improving communications among persons already or soon to be working on conservation strategies in Canada. Several suggestions were presented for achieving this important goal. The following list is ordered by the frequency of choice by the respondents.

- National conference
- Newsletters
- Centralized contact point
- Up-to-date list of conservation strategies and contacts

PART 4

CONCLUSIONS

This report is directed toward helping "jurisdictions in working out procedures and protocols for the development and integration of conservation strategies," as recommended in the original *Report of the National Task Force on Environment and Economy*. As such, this report becomes part of the information base available to provinces, territories and the federal government in the process of preparing conservation strategies.

The Progress Report of the National Task Force on Environment and Economy shows that virtually every jurisdiction in Canada is committed to developing a conservation strategy. This commitment on the part of so many governments is commendable and should continue to be encouraged wherever possible. Their efforts will be most effective if conservation strategy development is integrated across Canada. The contacts provided in Appendix B should be particularly helpful in this regard.

At the same time, interest in and contributions to strategy development by the business sector and the public are desirable and should also be encouraged. A combined effort of the many groups preparing regional and local conservation strategies will ensure an environmentally-sound and economically-secure future for all Canadians.

REFERENCES

Canadian Society of Environmental Biologists, 1987. Conservation Strategies in Canada. *CSEB Newsletter/Bulletin 44(2)*. Canadian Society of Environmental Biologists.

National Task Force on Environment and Economy. 1987 *Report of the National Task Force on Environment and Economy*. Submitted to the Canadian Council of Resource and Environment Ministers.

National Task Force on Environment and Economy. *Progress Report of the National Task Force on Environment and Economy*. October 1988.

APPENDIX A

TABLE OF CONTENTS FOR CONSERVATION STRATEGY DOCUMENTS

The following table of contents is from the Conservation Strategy for Prince Edward Island. That province is the first and, to date, only jurisdiction in Canada with a published conservation strategy that has also been approved by the legislature.

The structure of the P.E.I. strategy document roughly follows the pattern set by national strategies elsewhere in the world. For example, the Taiwanese, Australian, British, and Philippine strategies all include a discussion of the various biogeographical zones of the nation. Subnational strategies, as exemplified by the State of Victoria in Australia and Sarawak in Malaysia, follow a similar structure, although the level of detail varies widely.

The P.E.I. table of contents reflects the nature of P.E.I., and some modification of the structure would obviously be necessary for Ontario with its Great Lakes, British Columbia with its mountains, or Alberta with its large energy industry. Other modifications might reflect the varying importance of large urban areas across jurisdictions in Canada.

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- Highlights and Major Directions
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- Agriculture
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APPENDIX B

CONSERVATION STRATEGY CONTACTS

One of the most important issues raised by the respondents to the questionnaire was the need for further communication among those individuals, groups, and governments preparing conservation strategies. A national conference, a newsletter, and especially a list of contacts were cited as important for developing and integrating strategies in Canada. A catalog of case studies and demonstration projects was also mentioned. This preliminary list of contacts is a first step in that direction.

Mr. Jamie Bastedo, Senior Policy Analyst
Policy and Planning Division
Department of Renewable Resources
Government of Northwest Territories
Box 1320
Yellowknife, N.W.T.
X1A 2L9 Tel: (403) 920-8768

Ms Monika Behr
Memorial University
Newfoundland and Labrador Conservation
Strategy Committee
P.O. Box 114 St.
John's, Newfoundland
A1B 3X9 Tel: (709) 737-7496

Ms Dianne Berlinguette, Coordinator
Environment Conservation
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
10 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0H4 Tel: (819) 997-9242

Mr. H.A. Clarke, Director General
Canadian Wildlife Service
Conservation and Protection
Environment Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0H3 Tel: (819) 997-1301

Mr. Raymond P. Cote, Associate Director
School for Resource and Environmental Studies
Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3H 3E2 Tel: (902) 424-3632

Mr. Anthony H.J. Dorcey, Acting Director
Westwater Research Centre
University of British Columbia
2075 Wesbrook Mall
Vancouver, B.C.
V6T 1W5 Tel: (604) 228-5725

Ms. Nancy Doubleday
Inuit Circumpolar Conference
3rd Floor, 176 Gloucester Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K2P 0A6 Tel: (613) 238-8181

Mr. Stephan Fuller, Manager
Policy Analysis and Development
Dept. of Renewable Resources
Government of Yukon
Box 2703
Whitehorse, Yukon
Y1A 2C6 Tel: (403) 667-5634

Dr. Julian Dumanski
Soil Conservation Canada
Land Resource Research Centre
1094 Bedbrook Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K2C 2R7 Tel: (613) 995-5011

Ms Diane Griffin, Executive Director
Island Nature Trust
P.O. Box 265
Charlottetown, P.E.I.
C1A 7K4 Tel: (902) 892-7513

Mr. Monte Hummel, President
World Wildlife Fund Canada
60 St. Clair Avenue E. Suite 201
Toronto, Ontario
M4T 1N5 Tel: (416) 923-8173

Mr. Marcel Junius, President
Conseil de la conservation et de l'environnement
800, place d'Youville, 19e etage
Quebec, Quebec
GIR 3P4 Tel: (418) 643-3819

Mr. Michael Kelly, Senior Research Officer
Environment Council of Alberta
8th Floor, Weber Centre
5555 Calgary Trail Southbound N.W.
Edmonton, Alberta
T6H 5P9 Tel: (403) 427-5792

Mr. Kingsley Lewis, Coordinator
Provincial Conservation Strategy
P.O. Box 2000, 11 Kent Street
Charlottetown, P.E.I.
C1A 7N8 Tel: (902) 368-4879

Ms Liz Osborn
Outdoor Recreation Council of British Columbia
Suite 334, 1367 West Broadway
Vancouver, B.C.
V6H 4A9 Tel: (604) 737-3000

Ms Betty McGregor,
Resource Management Consultant
Environmental Assessment Branch
Saskatchewan Environment and Public Safety
3085 Albert Street
Regina, Saskatchewan
54P 3R8 Tel: (306) 787-6139

Ms Ruth McKechnie, Section Head
Policy and Strategy Development Section
Conservation Strategies & Development Division
Sustainable Development Branch
Canadian Wildlife Service
Environment Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0H3 Tel: (819) 953-1433

Mr. J. Potton
Manitoba Department of Natural Resources
201-1495 St. James Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3H 0W9 Tel: (204) 945-6658

Mr. K. J. Richards, Coordinator
Intergovernmental Relations
Ministry of the Environment
135 St. Clair Avenue West
Toronto, Ontario
M4V lP5 Tel: (416) 323-5097

Mr. Miles Scott-Brown, Executive Coordinator
Wild West Program
World Wildlife Fund Canada
#204 - 1422 Kensington Road N.W.
Calgary, Alberta
T2N 3P9 Tel: (403) 270-8220

Mr. Ronald Searles, Assistant Deputy Minister
Dept. of Municipal Affairs and Environment
P.O. Box 6000
Fredericton, New Brunswick
E3B 5H1 Tel: (506) 453-2656

Senator H.O. Sparrow, President
Soil Conservation Canada The Senate of Canada
Parliament Buildings
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A4 Tel: (613) 996-5994

Mr. Chris Winter, Research Assistant
Conservation Council of Ontario
Suite 202, 74 Victoria Street
Toronto, Ontario
M5C 2A5 Tel: (416) 362-2218

APPENDIX C

Questionnaire on Conservation Strategies in Canada

Please complete the following section.

Your Name and Title

Organization/Department

Address

Postal Code

Contact Person if not Yourself

Tel. No.

Fax/Dex No.

The questionnaire has been divided into two parts. Part I is a series of questions about conservation strategy development. In Part II we present our best judgement of a definition, objectives, principles, and process steps for conservation strategies in Canada. We ask for your comments to assist in building a consensus on a set of concepts that will provide a foundation for conservation strategy development across Canada.

Part I: Development of Your Conservation Strategy

Please complete this section if you are involved in preparing a federal, provincial/territorial, regional, local, or sectoral conservation strategy.

1.0 Has a province-wide or territory-wide conservation strategy been completed for your province/territory? Yes No

1.1 If yes, where may we obtain a copy?

1.2 Has the strategy been approved or formally adopted by the government in your jurisdiction?

Yes | No

1.3 If yes, when?

Date

2.0 Is a comprehensive (i.e. province-wide and multi-sectoral) conservation strategy process underway in your province or territory?

Yes | No

3.0 If a comprehensive conservation strategy is neither completed nor underway for your province/territory, are you aware of plans to prepare such a conservation strategy?

Yes | No

3.1 If yes, what are the expected start-up and completion dates?

Start-up

Completion

4.0 Are you aware of any regional, local, or sectoral conservation strategies in your province or territory? (e.g. prairie conservation action plan, forestry sector, agriculture sector, wildlife, wetlands?)

Yes | No

If yes, please list and if possible provide contact person, telephone, address, etc.:

_____

_____

_____

_____

4.1 What is the scale of your conservation strategy?

Provincial

Territorial

Federal

Regional

Local

Sectoral

5.0 What are the major areas/resource sectors targeted in the conservation strategy? Basic principles such as multi-sectoral management, etc., will be covered in Part II. Check as many as appropriate.

- ☐ Agriculture
- ☐ Air Quality
- ☐ Biological/Genetic Diversity
- ☐ Renewable Energy Sources (solar, wind, hydro, biomass, etc.)
- ☐ Non-renewable Energy Sources (coal, oil, gas, nuclear, etc.)
- ☐ Energy Conservation
- ☐ Environmental Education
- ☐ Fish and Wildlife
- ☐ Forestry
- ☐ Historical Resources
- ☐ Land Use
- ☐ Environmental Legislation (EIAs, Pollution Standards, etc.)
- ☐ Minerals (primary metals, etc.)
- ☐ Parks and Outdoor Recreation
- ☐ Tourism
- ☐ Transboundary Effects
- ☐ Urban Environment
- ☐ Water Resources
- ☐ Wetlands
- ☐ Others (Please Name)

6.0 Do the **fundamental** objectives (i.e. those listed in 18.0 of this document) vary among sectors? ☐ Yes ☐ No

6.1 If so, what are the major objectives in each sector? Please list on an attached sheet. If necessary, include separate sheets or photocopies of the relevant pages of the strategy.

7.0 Is there a time-frame for review and evaluation built into or planned for the conservation strategy? ☐ Yes ☐ No

7.1 If yes, what is the estimated timing for evaluation?

- Semianually
- Annually
- Biannually
- Five Year Interval
- Ten Year Interval
- Varies by Sector

8.0 Please summarize the steps followed in the preparation of the conservation strategy.

9.0 What are (were) the primary organizations involved in the process? Please list.

9.1 Government

9.2 Industry

9.3 Non-government Organizations

9.4 Unaffiliated Individuals, Communities, Other Contributors

10.0 Were there other groups that should be (have been) involved but were missed at the outset? Please list:

11.0 Was government approval sought for the strategy preparations? Yes No

11.1 Was government approval obtained for the project? Yes No

11.2 If yes, what mechanisms were used to obtain government approval? (For example, was the provincial legislature apprised of your work? Were particular ministers approached for their support or participation? Were public servants asked to participate in workshops, report writing, reviews, etc.?

11.3 Is government participating in the project? Yes No

In Retrospect

12.0 What were the key decision points in the conservation strategy process?

13.0 What were the pitfalls you confronted, and can you suggest how they may have been avoided?

14.0 What were the most successful techniques used in your process?

15.0 What improvements to the process can you suggest?

16.0 What mechanism(s) would be most useful to improve communications among conservation strategy participants across Canada?

- ☐ Newsletter
- ☐ List of Contacts
- ☐ National Conference/Workshop
- ☐ Personal Correspondence
- ☐ Computerized Messaging and Conference System
- ☐ Centralized Contact Point

Other (Please Specify)

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_____

16.2 Are you documenting the conservation strategy process underway, and if so, would you be willing to make your documents available to others so they may learn from your experience?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Part II: The Context of Canadian Conservation Strategies

In this section our purpose is to seek consensus: on a definition for conservation strategies in Canada; on the objectives of strategies in Canada; on the principles to be adhered to in strategy development; and to the process steps required for a successful strategy.

Please read the following definition of what conservation strategies IN CANADA should represent. Please provide comments on the applicability, comprehensiveness, and the extent of your agreement with this draft definition.

17.0 Definition

Conservation Strategies: Planning the Wise Use of Resources

A conservation strategy is a guide for the sustainable use of our resources. It contains objectives, principles, and actions designed to ensure that the use of resources today will allow ourselves and future generations to maintain or improve the quality and standard of living, and allow those less fortunate today the opportunity to improve their lot. Sustainability requires that resource use be both environmentally and economically sound. Preservation of certain resources or areas is an integral part of sustaining some ecosystems.

A conservation strategy is not intended to serve as a series of immutable rules, but instead is designed to provide points of reference and standards of evaluation. A strategy does not provide rigid plans for our future, but presents criteria by which to judge our decisions.

Comments:

Please examine the following objectives for conservation strategies in Canada and provide comments on the applicability, comprehensiveness, and the extent of your agreement with these draft objectives.

18.0 Objectives

Conservation strategies are based on certain fundamental objectives. The first three are from the World Conservation Strategy, and the others are drawn from the experience of many nations, including Canada with actual strategy development

1. Maintain essential ecological processes and life support systems on which human survival and development depend. For example, soil regeneration and protection, recycling of nutrients, and the cleansing of waters.

Comments:

2. Preserve biological diversity, the basis for many of the above processes and life support systems. The diversity of living resources provides the foundation for the protection and improvement of cultivated plants and domesticated animals, the adaptability of micro-organisms vital to survival, and the security of many of our industries.

Comments:

3. Achieve sustainable use of species and ecosystems. Fish and wildlife, forests, agricultural soils, and grazing lands support some of our most important industries such as tourism, forestry, fishing and farming.

Comments:

4. Provide for recreational, spiritual, aesthetic, and other non-material needs of Canadians. Maintain and develop diverse opportunities for the use and appreciation of natural resources.

Comments:

5. Maintain and improve the quality of life in the urban environment.

Comments:

6. Use and manage non-renewable resources in the interests of developing a long-term environmentally sound and sustainable economy.

Comments:

Please examine the following principles for conservation strategies in Canada and provide comments on the applicability, comprehensiveness, and the extent of your agreement with these draft principles.

19.0 Principles

Certain principles have been incorporated into strategy development to provide guidelines for activities directed toward sustainable development. These principles are used as criteria for evaluating whether and to what degree proposed or present activities are in keeping with the overall goal of sustainable development.

1. **Resources must be managed for sustainable use.** Using resources in a sustainable manner is akin to spending the interest while keeping the capital. Non-renewable resources can be managed sustainably by not exploiting the resource at a rate that exceeds your ability to develop another source, or develop a substitute. The Four Rs can extend the life of non-renewable resources: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Recover.

2. **Where possible encourage renewable resource development over exhaustible non-renewable development.** Realistically, a resource is renewable only if it is capable of regeneration without excessive human help (to the point of being uneconomic). Some resources are theoretically renewable, but for practical human purposes: once used forever gone.

3. **Keep your options open.** In the management of resources, prevent the loss of options by minimizing the impact of each resource user on the potential alternative users. The ultimate closure of options is species extinction.

4. **Integrate as much information from as wide a variety of perspectives as possible in planning and managing resources.** As described in the *Report of the National Task Force on Environment and Economy*, the greatest weakness in Canadian efforts to achieve sustainable development has been the sectoral approach to planning and development. A multi-sectoral approach to planning and policy formulation minimizes the recurring and wasteful problem of unanticipated consequences.

5. **When considering solutions to problems, focus on causes as well as symptoms, and mix cure with prevention.** It is often easier to identify and treat the symptoms of ecological problems rather than to dig deeper and find the cause. However, reacting to or dealing only with the symptoms is ineffective in the long term. Left untreated, the causes of the symptoms may gradually erode our ability to deal with either. A successful strategy should be a careful combination of curing current problems and equipping people and institutions with the knowledge to anticipate and avoid future problems.

6. **Make sure you know the extent of your agreement before you begin disagreeing.** Only through conflict and its resolution in the open forum of reasoned debate can we achieve the balance and wisdom necessary to sustain the various needs of our pluralistic society. It is pointless and wasteful of valuable time and money to perpetuate a conflict on the basis of mutual misunderstanding. We should all be careful not to waste any of society's resources in a debate based on an unwillingness to consider carefully what the other side is really saying because of an ideological prejudgement.

7. **Improvements to our resource management systems will inevitably be grounded in our present institutions and processes.** Each conservation strategy has to address existing policies, programs, and institutional arrangements before valid suggestions for improvements can be made. In order to improve a system those most affected — the public, industry, and government at all levels — must be involved in the process to reach the consensus necessary for agreement on goals, principles, and standards.

Comments:

Please examine the following process steps for preparing conservation strategies in Canada and provide comments on the applicability, comprehensiveness, and the extent of your agreement with these draft process steps.

20.0 Processes for Developing Conservation Strategies

Conservation strategy development generally has entailed eight functional steps (functions carried out by various means) culminating in a document to provide direction for the sustainable use and management of resources. These steps are:

- establish goals for sustainable development in accordance with stated objectives and principles (listed in the preceding sections);
- determine what is required to achieve these goals while accommodating both conservation and development objectives;
- establish priorities for the goals using the criteria of significance, urgency, irreversibility, and probability of success;
- identify the obstacles to meeting the goals;
- analyze present and planned mechanisms for dealing with the obstacles;
- propose the most cost-effective, least disruptive and most integrated methods to overcome obstacles;
- provide a means for continuing evaluation of the goals, of progress toward achieving them, and of the cost-effectiveness of the solutions.

Comments:

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21.0 Other comments about the survey or any matter pertaining to conservation strategies. (Please use additional sheets if necessary.)

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